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# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

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## THE BASIS OF HUMAN ASSOCIATION

**A** SOCIETY is not formed whenever a number of human individuals under the promptings of the same impulse engage together in the same pursuit. The pangs of hunger might cause several men to go in company to the same place and there simultaneously to search for food. They might furthermore be associating, but the fact that they were impelled by the same instinct to engage in the same activity on the same spot would not prove that they were doing so.

Nor does the division of labor with exchange of products constitute genuine association. It would perhaps be impossible to imagine how an industrial system like this could exist without true association, if we were not acquainted with such remarkable coordinations of activity through pure instinct as the ant colony exemplifies.

The reciprocal activities originating in the sex and gregarious instincts do not of themselves constitute a true society. To be sure, these acts have other agents as their objective; their continuous give and take assembles individuals in families or herds. But the other individuals whose appearance, position and movement call forth these activities are objects as external in their way as trees and rocks and rivers.

The semblance of social and political authority may even be exercised and obeyed without really associating the individuals involved. The adult males, or one of them, by virtue of sexual or parental relations or through the operation of the instincts of leadership and subjection, may exercise a control through their undisputed initiative and power to punish which gives a group the aspect of a governed society. But sheep follow a leader, and the functions of government and control in the seal rookery are energetically if boisterously exercised by the adult males.

The basis of community is *communication*. But this statement must appear inexcusably trite unless a definite meaning can be given to communication capable of illuminating actual relationships. Let us suppose that two men set about to perform together a compara-

tively simple task, such as building a lodge which will give them shelter for a season's hunting. They first talk over their plans: each communicates his ideas to the other. The conditions of such communication are that each puts his ideas and preferences into forms of speech; he gives them objectivity by setting them in the wider relationships characteristic of human experience generally; this of itself imparts new meaning to them. The suggestions which each receives from his fellow convey to him not merely the meaning originally intended but that meaning interpreted in the light of his own experience and with this interpretation having for him perchance an added interest and significance which they did not possess in the mind in which they originated. This added suggestion or modified meaning he makes explicit by the aid of speech and tells it to his fellow. In the meantime his ideas previously expressed come back to him reinterpreted in the light of the other's experience and outlook. So the discussion proceeds with the result that new ideas take form which assimilate elements of value and relevancy to the present situation from the experience of each and which, because they have won the assent of both, yield a plan upon which the two can together agree. This is *discussion*.

Then they set about each in his own way to carry out the common plan. Each uses his own initiative in choosing the sequence of acts that promises most expeditiously to advance the undertaking. But each acts in the presence of the other, seeing his fellow adopt a different method of accomplishing the same result. Possibly he doubts the effectiveness of his fellow's method as compared with his own, and expresses his doubt by a question. His co-worker explains and defends his own way of working; he perhaps criticizes it, with the result that his fellow modifies his own method of operation. The result is that both change their ways of working so that while each follows a difference and original line, the activity of the two is correlated with reference to an identical end. This is *cooperation*.

Together they complete the work; their plan is carried out; the hunting lodge is built and ready to be used as was intended. Each feels the satisfaction of successful accomplishment, of realizing through his own activity an end which he had previously projected in thought and whose existence he had at that time willed. This satisfaction he expresses upon his face, or by laugh or exclamation. He perceives the same signs of emotion in his comrade. Since these have to his knowledge the same source as his own, they acquire a personal meaning for him and enhance his own satisfaction. The two companions are united in feeling not because they happen to be pleased or joyful at the same time but because the satisfaction of

both has source in a common personal achievement. This, the rational meaning of their common satisfaction, they seek to express in song or dance in which they join together or in some form of triumphal decoration with which they emblazon the walls of their lodge. This is concord of emotion.

As shown by this example personal communication in the concrete means discussion, cooperation and concordant emotion. Let us consider each of these activities in turn, discovering if we can what feature it is, possessed by them all, which makes them true modes of human association. In discussion the medium of transmission is language; the material communicated consists of ideas, objects, that is, of conscious intelligence. These ideal objects are constituted of qualities and relations which intelligence has selected from the medley of perception and to which it clings in the changing flux of sensory experience. Such qualities, once distinguished become the abiding characters which sense-experience with its ceaseless change and endless variety is expected to show. They are, therefore, *universals*, attributes common to the various experiences of the same individual. These universals constituting as they do the meaning of experience may be shared, for, by an inherent necessity, intelligence assumes that the qualities which it discriminates in the flux of perceptual experience will be recognized by other individuals who observe under identical conditions. (This social implication of the universality of meanings is of course explicitly present when the object is first pointed out to the individual by name). As men associate, this world of common meanings, a social sphere, supplants the many private worlds of animal sentience which owe such similarity as they possess to the fact that similar instincts guided by similar sense-organs determine the reactions of all human individuals to the same physical environment. In the world of intelligent intercourse objects are formulated in their permanent relations of antecedence and consequence; they are also interpreted in the light of their varied possibilities of further achievement and satisfaction. Uniform causation takes the place of perceived succession; an order of values takes the place of individually anticipated satisfactions. The generally valid correlation of objects brought about through verbal communication is a function of the intelligence common to all men, which preserves its identity in the midst of changing circumstance.

The second mode of association is cooperation. Its essential condition is to be found in the ability of the human individual to realize purposes common to the choice of himself and others through the instrumentality of bodily movements freely initiated and controlled. To be sure all objects that have meaning are as such capable of

realization, in the sense of verification, by all intelligent individuals who fulfil the necessary conditions. But logical value is not moral value; all intelligible objects do not have the same practical interest for all individuals. To be adopted as the common purpose of two or more individuals an object must promise some measure of positive satisfaction or practical fulfilment to all concerned. The satisfactoriness of an object is itself measured by the range or variety of agreeable activities to which it opens the way. Such evaluation of objects according to comprehensiveness of character is assumed to hold for all human individuals and affords ground for a conscious agreement in purpose among men. Objects whose value is generally agreed upon may be such as to make their appeal to instinctive cravings for food, shelter, security, *etc.*, or to strictly social interests as those in education or recreation, or religious observance. Without community of purpose there can be no cooperation since its essence is to enlist the inventive activities of individuals in the attainment of generally understood and commonly desired results. If a man purposes simply to acquire wealth that he may use for his private enjoyment, he can not expect the cooperation of his fellows in its acquisition unless he promises them an ulterior reward in the shape of wages to be used for their private satisfactions, and at best this produces but a poor imitation of genuine cooperation. But if the industry planned and initiated by one individual is organized and directed so as to meet general human needs and this is understood by his fellows he may expect them to assist in the spirit of true co-operation. Within the limits of the common purpose which is the basis of true cooperation there is room for competition in efficiency between individuals and abundant incentive is furnished for the exercise of initiative and the display of originality.

Emotional concord becomes a form of personal communication when it springs from a source that is mutually understood by the participants. Thus it is more than sympathy as this is usually defined (an instinctive reaction to the visible signs of another's pleasure or pain). Perhaps the first and fundamental instance of emotional concord as true association is furnished by friendship or love. Here mutual acquaintance and admiration give meaning to looks, words and gestures which by their interchange serve to express and augment, in cumulative fashion, the satisfaction each feels in the character and presence of the other. This form of communication, depending as it does upon visible and audible manifestations of uniquely individual although generally intelligible satisfactions, attains highest development in the appreciation of beauty. Beautiful objects whether of nature or of art make possible an emotional con-

cord more far-reaching among men than the facial expressions or gestures of individuals; they do this because their meaning searches more profoundly the depths of our common human experience.

We are now prepared to understand the basis of human association. It is personal communication carried on through discussion, cooperation and emotional concord. Discussion is made possible by the fact that the ends which men choose among are generally intelligible. An end is a permanent possibility of realization for a subject or self; such a self is essentially social, for it maintains its personal identity by opposing to the shifting play of animal sentience an order of definable objects that is assumed to be real for all other selves as well. Cooperation depends upon the fact that the satisfaction which human individuals seek from the realization of objects as ends is a function of their comprehensiveness and this, since it is based upon their intelligible character, is assumed to hold for all men equally. The possibility of an agreement in purpose among men is therefore created, an agreement which is favored by the fact that the more comprehensive ends are those which include in their scope the interests of others as well as the self. Emotional concord is made possible by the fact that the feelings which accompany, and result from, human action spring from the pursuit of commonly intelligible ends concerning whose value there is general agreement. The "kingdom of ends" is by nature a social kingdom; the single self in pursuit of an intelligently considered and deliberately chosen end involves the society of selves participating in the realization of common ends. Personal communication as a process has three essential characteristics: first, it is governed by ends that are social and imply the community of selves; second, it gives fullest opportunity for the exercise of individual initiative and inventiveness in the attainment of ends whose value is generally appreciated; and, third, it insures from the intercourse of free persons the discovery of new values in the discharge of our common social task.

Understanding then that the basis of human association is found in the community of ends which govern the conduct of human individuals, it is important to see how the various instincts natural to man afford the occasion and incentive for exchange of ideas, team-play in action, and fellow-feeling. A good single illustration of this is furnished by the social meal. The cause and occasion for this social observance is of course the appeasing of hunger. But its social significance and value lie in the encouragement which it gives to continuous conversation and a lively interchange of ideas with a glow of mutually intelligible satisfaction. When as often in primitive society the meal is the outcome and climax of the successful

hunt, these features are more strikingly exemplified, although to be sure the mental give-and-take may not be on so high a level of intelligence.

The group of instincts at the root of our industrial and economic activities, the instincts of individual self-preservation, of food, of property, *etc.*, afford occasion in their exercise for much genuinely social experience, predominantly cooperative in character. The comradeship of the hunting party and the warrior band are celebrated in song and legend. The personal qualities developed are those of bravery and loyalty. The strictly industrial pursuits, carried on at first mainly by women, encourage comradeship of a more passive but enduring sort, the fellowship of those who together discharge monotonous tasks sustained by the thought of future benefits to accrue from their labor. This cooperation is frequently limited to the family circle and the qualities developed are those of mutual helpfulness, perseverance and thrift. The division of labor and specialization of industry call out a new and more intensive form of cooperation, that between fellow-craftsmen in the common workshop, presupposing a certain degree of technical skill and of special knowledge with all, and giving opportunity for the exercise of originality under the inspiration of others' example, and the guidance of an established and authoritative technique.

The instincts in which political organization originated, the gregarious instinct and that of race-survival, the instinct of leadership and that of subjection, have in their special way encouraged genuine association. In this case the community has been principally one of ideas; the state rests primarily upon mutual understanding. Of course when the body-politic was identical with the hunting pack or with the enlarged family its social values could not be distinguished from those evoked by the reproductive or the food instincts. Certainly cooperation has always played a part in the political relationship. But the distinctively political sphere has always been that of counsel; foreshadowed by the deliberations of chiefs and elders in the primitive tribe, for long obscured by the overdevelopment of authority, discussion has been generally acknowledged as the basis of democratic government.

Through the action of the sexual and parental instincts in establishing and maintaining the family another field is created for personal association. Here the community is to a greater extent one of feeling; it is the mutually recognized satisfaction which each of the two participants feel in the other's appearance and characteristics that distinguishes conjugal love from mere sex attraction. This mutual satisfaction receives objective embodiment in the existence

and growth of the child which as the product of their union forms an enduring tie between the father and mother. The continuous and close association of the family circle gives opportunity for the exchange of ideas while the reciprocal physical differences between man and woman, parents and child, encourages mutual helpfulness. The human individual first achieves common understanding as a child in company with his parents and brothers and sisters. As he grows older he enters into real cooperation with the members of his family, a cooperation that may become very thorough-going and very helpful.

It is noteworthy that the activities through which the principal natural instincts (with the help of intelligence) gain satisfaction may refuse that subordination which is the condition of civilization and may succeed in degrading social relationships into mere means to their own gratification. Thus in industrial activities persons, as well as inanimate things and natural forces, may be employed as instrumentalities for the securing of individual comfort and pleasure. The exigencies of political organization may be seized by individuals and utilized as opportunities for increasing their own power and prestige. The attractions of sex may prompt individuals to turn other persons into sources of sensual enjoyment. Society is in constant danger of relapsing into animalism through a reversal of the true order of primacy between the natural and the social.

To one who considers the social values that may thus be given to purely instinctive activities the question inevitably occurs, may we not make personal communication our exclusive aim instead of waiting to avail ourselves of the opportunities offered by the routine of natural existence. This we do in fact attempt when we seek to realize the "ideals" of truth and goodness and beauty. These ideals all propose an association wider than that limited by the circumstances of personal presence and acquaintance; each implies in its way the establishment of the "perfect society," the community of free persons to membership in which every human being may aspire. But since the association here contemplated is usually carried on (as when the medium is literature or art) with individuals physically and temporally remote, we may call it indirect communication, inasmuch as the relation established while essentially a personal one, does not involve personal intercourse in the usual understanding of the phrase.

To seek and to discover truth is to increase our common understanding with humanity and to enlarge our experience so as to admit the facts experienced by all other men (ideally of course to include all the facts open to possible human experience). This is a familiar

form of statement; its very familiarity prevents an appreciation of the significance and wonder of the fact it expresses. We lament the limitations of the human lot, the shortness of man's natural life and the defects of his native endowment. But do we appreciate the marvellous power that our intelligence gives us as individuals of recreating the universe and of recapitulating the history of this planet and its successive forms of life, within the limits of our own consciousness? Through the instrumentality of oral tradition and of scientific and historical writings we share the experiences of other men in many different places both near and remote, and of all times, from our own to the far distant past. These experiences have been correlated in accordance with laws that express the conditions of general intelligibility; they have been purged of all exclusive subjectivity and converted into objective facts. Through a realizing study which reinterprets them in the light of his own experience, the individual enters into communion with the spirit of humanity and shares in the vicissitudes of its lengthy and checkered career. The full possibilities of intellectual communication are realized when the individual by thought and investigation renders certain of his experiences that are unique and significant into terms that are generally intelligible and thus makes them accessible to his fellows of his own and future generations.

The industrial methods and mechanical inventions, the political, economic and social institutions to which each human generation falls heir represent the outcome of past efforts of mankind to subject the physical and vital forces of its environment to intelligent control. The individual who learns to employ these agencies and accompanies his practise with an intelligent insight into the arms and conditions of their use, enters into cooperation with the successive generations of his fellows who have employed, improved, and perfected them. Actually he is admitted into the larger human comradeship, becoming a fellow-worker with humanity in the discharge of its world-task. He participates in the arduous efforts and final successes of those inventors and reformers who have striven and suffered in the endeavor to subject natural forces to the purposes and ends of intelligent personality. This cooperation is rendered complete if the individual by applying his own inventive skill to the solution of economic and political problems is able to bring about some improvement in existing methods of operation in any one of the fields of human action.

Æsthetic appreciation is akin to the satisfaction which crowns successful endeavor, since it springs from a complete if temporary identification of the will of the subject with the beautiful. But the

social value of art lies in its power of communicating to the individual the experiences of other men far removed from him in space and time, not the facts their intelligence has verified nor the practical expedients they have found useful, but those personal impressions of fulfilment or frustration which register themselves in emotion. Such impressions are communicable because universally intelligible; they are personal interpretations. The media are of course form and color, tone and rhythm, but their æsthetic value depends upon the deeper human meaning they convey.

While acquisition of knowledge, participation in organized economic and political activities, and appreciation of beauty in nature and in art, do introduce us into wider human relationships, the association thus established falls short in important respects, when compared with direct personal communication. It can not be denied that one may enter into genuine communication with an author through study of his writings, with an artist through appreciation of his works, with a political reformer through support of the measures he inaugurated. But such association is after all indirect and suffers marked disadvantages therefrom; the direct give-and-take of personal intercourse with its stimulating and fructifying power is entirely absent—the passing inspiration struggling to express itself, the flash of immediate understanding and response, the momentary fusion of two minds in the origination of a new and fruitful idea. A higher social synthesis is therefore indicated, in which persons possessed of thorough scientific and historical knowledge, trained in the use of established industrial methods and socio-political institutions and capable of taking disinterested pleasure in objects which reflect the significance of common human experience, profit by the vitalizing influence and creative stimulus of direct personal contact. In such case the individuals associated are able to interpret and illuminate the experiences which they exchange by relating them to the larger life and progressive achievement of humanity.

Clearly such association as that just described is the ideal of civilized democracy. But just as clearly it is impossible of realization in the modern nation-state. The foundation of social union, no matter how many individuals are involved, is of course personal communication. The emphasis placed by recent writers upon this point is indeed well-timed. Moreover, by means of education, vocational training, *etc.*, this association should be made as intelligent, effective and satisfying as it can possibly be. But it is at best of narrow scope where a hundred million people are concerned. Personal contact is limited for the most part to those who reside in the same locality; it should of course be well-developed among those entrusted

with administering identical or closely related branches of government; it is highly desirable although not always practicable between the residents of any district and their chosen representatives. Beyond these limits communication must be indirect—through newspapers and periodicals, industrial processes, social conventions and political machinery. Such communication can create social unity only if its processes relate themselves to a common historic background which gives authority and a measure of justification to the existing economic and political systems and at the same time suggests an ideal to guide in their reconstruction. The importance of indirect communication as a stabilizing factor in modern society deserves more recognition; it is our chief protection against excesses of local enthusiasm, against the extravagancies of closely communicating groups who are swept off their feet by new ideas or programmes engendered in the course of their own discussions.

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### THE LOCUS OF TELEOLOGY IN A MECHANISTIC UNIVERSE

IT is a cause of very great regret to me that I can not meet Professor Holt on his own ground.<sup>1</sup> The question of the correct use of concepts which he has raised is no doubt important in itself and most interesting to the readers of this JOURNAL. But it is not for me to undertake a discussion for which I am so little skilled, since, if I am not wrong, Holt's criticism of my work can be met without passing beyond the field of science. The truth seems to be that Holt has certain very definite faults to find with the teleological conclusion which I have reached, and that he has associated these as illustrations with a larger logical criticism of the structure of knowledge. He comes at length to a result which I can only think a counsel of perfection far beyond the present powers of men of science, and also, if I have read them rightly, of most philosophers. Yet this is no affair of mine.

The two books<sup>2</sup> which seem to Professor Holt so full of bad reasoning describe what I believe to be a scientific fact. This description has involved not only a large amount of scientific material but also, perhaps needlessly, a small amount of philosophical argument. The philosophical argument is, however, almost though not quite entirely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. this JOURNAL, Vol. XVII., pp. 365-381.

<sup>2</sup> *The Fitness of the Environment*, New York, 1913; *The Order of Nature*, Cambridge, Mass., 1917.